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LETTER DATED 23 DECEMBER 1998 FROM THE CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES A.I. OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF BURKINA FASO TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have the honour to transmit herewith the communiqué issued following the fourth ordinary session of the Central Organ of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, at the level of Heads of State and Government, held in Ouagadougou on 17 December 1998.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Paul Robert TIENDRÉBÉOGO
Second Counsellor
Chargé d'affaires, a.i.

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Annex

Communiqué of 17 December 1998 issued following the fourth ordinary session of the Central Organ of the Organization of African Unity Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, at the level of Heads of State and Government

The Central Organ of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution held its fourth ordinary session at the level of Heads of State and Government in Ouagadougou on 17 December 1998. The session was chaired by H.E. Blaise Compaore, President of Burkina Faso and current Chairman of OAU. At the end of its deliberations, the Central Organ decided as follows:

I. On the Dispute between Ethiopia and Eritrea

The Central Organ considered the report of the OAU High-level Delegation on the dispute between Ethiopia and Eritrea. It congratulated the Delegation on the commendable efforts it had made in order to promote a peaceful and comprehensive solution to the dispute.

The Central Organ took note of the respective positions of the two Parties on the proposals of the High-level Delegation.

The Central Organ endorsed the proposals for a Framework Agreement submitted by the OAU High-level Delegation to the two Parties which constituted an appropriate framework for the resolution of the dispute between Ethiopia and Eritrea.

The Central Organ commended the two Parties for the confidence they continue to repose in the OAU and for the cooperation they extended to the OAU High-level Delegation in the execution of its mandate, as well as the restraint that they had shown.

The Central Organ requested the OAU High-level Delegation to remain seized with the dispute and called on the two Parties to continue to cooperate with the Delegation with a view to creating the necessary conditions for a speedy implementation of the Framework Agreement. The Central Organ further urged both Parties to continue to exercise restraint.

II. On the Situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

The Central Organ expressed its grave concern over the unfolding situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and its consequences for the peace, security and stability of the region. It reaffirmed its support for the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the importance the OAU attached to the need to respect the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of that country, in accordance with the provisions of the OAU Charter, particularly, Resolution AHG/Res.16 (I), adopted in Cairo in 1964.

The Central Organ fully endorsed the efforts exerted by President Frederick Chiluba of Zambia and other leaders in the region, aimed at finding a peaceful solution to the crisis and securing a Ceasefire Agreement between the concerned parties. In this connection, it welcomed the proposal to convene a Regional Summit in Lusaka on 27 and 28 December 1998.

The Central Organ called on all the concerned parties to cooperate fully with the leaders of the region in their efforts.

The Central Organ expressed satisfaction at the support the United Nations had lent to the regional efforts and the cooperation existing between the OAU and the United Nations.

III. On the Situation in Burundi

The Central Organ examined the situation in Burundi and expressed satisfaction at the progress made in the peace process in the country and within the framework of the Arusha talks held under the auspices of Mwalimu Julius Nyerere.

The Central Organ urged all the Burundian parties to pursue their efforts with a view to achieving a lasting solution to the conflict in Burundi.

The Central Organ commended the Facilitator and the countries of the Region for their relentless efforts to promote a peaceful solution to the conflict in Burundi and appealed to them to lift the sanctions imposed on Burundi.

In this connection, the Central Organ adopted a special Resolution on the question of sanctions.

IV. On Angola

The Central Organ reiterated that the primary cause of the crisis in Angola and of the current impasse in the peace process, was the failure by Mr. Jonas Savimbi and his military wing to comply with their obligations under the Lusaka Protocol and the relevant Security Council and OAU resolutions.

The Central Organ observed that the União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA), led by Mr. Jonas Savimbi, was carrying out military actions against defenceless civilians and continued to lay landmines in areas where they had already been cleared. Additionally, UNITA continued to intensify its military build-up over the past few months in preparation for a full scale war against the people and government of the Republic of Angola.

The Central Organ endorsed the Southern African Development Community (SADC) decision taken in Mauritius in September 1998 which, inter alia, declared Mr. Savimbi as a war criminal and called for his isolation.

The Central Organ called upon all OAU Member States to strictly impose travel restrictions against Mr. Savimbi and other UNITA officials as demanded by the relevant Security Council resolutions.

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The Central Organ stressed the urgent need for peace, unity and national reconciliation in Angola.

The Central Organ appealed to the international community to render the necessary humanitarian and economic assistance for the reconstruction of Angola, especially, for the demining programme, the rehabilitation of key infrastructure destroyed by the war.

The Central Organ requested the countries of the Region in close cooperation with the Secretary-General of the OAU, to actively monitor developments in Angola and to act appropriately.

V. On Guinea-Bissau

The Central Organ expressed satisfaction at the positive developments that had taken place in the evolution of a conflict in Guinea-Bissau, particularly, the signing on 26 August 1998, in Prala, of a Ceasefire Agreement, the Abuja Agreement of 1 November 1998 and the appointment of a Prime Minister as well as proposals to form a Government of national unity, the structure and composition of which were defined at the Lomé meeting held on 15 December 1998.

The Central Organ commended Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Member States for the significant contribution made towards the gradual return of peace in Guinea-Bissau.

The Central Organ appealed to ECOWAS Member States that had pledged to provide troops for deployment in Guinea-Bissau, to honour their commitment as quickly as possible.

The Central Organ appealed to Member States of OAU and the United Nations to provide the necessary logistical support for the rapid deployment of the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) in Guinea-Bissau.

VI. On the Situation in the Comoros

The Central Organ examined the situation in the Federal Islamic Republic of the Comoros in the light of the briefing made by H.E. Tadjidine Ben Saïd Massounde, the Acting President of the Comoros. It expressed its grave concern over the situation of anarchy prevailing in the Comorian Island of Anjouan and the humanitarian problems caused by the fighting which broke out between opposing factions within the separatist movement.

The Central Organ firmly supported the efforts made by the countries of the Region to deal with the situation prevailing in Anjouan. In that connection, it expressed satisfaction over the dispatch of a military assessment mission to the Comoros by the countries of the Region from 9 to 11 December 1998.

The Central Organ requested the countries of the Region to urgently take necessary measures to put an end to the situation prevailing in Anjouan. To that end, the Central Organ requested South Africa, in its capacity as the Coordinator of the regional efforts on the Comoros, to undertake consultations

with the other countries of the Region in order to take appropriate measures to deal with the situation.

The Central Organ appealed to Member States and the rest of the international community to provide humanitarian assistance to the people affected by the fighting in Anjouan.